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## RED CROSS WORK

### THE RED CROSS AND THE NEW YORK COUNTY NURSES' SOCIETY

THE principal feature of the meeting of the New York County Nurses' Society held April 7th at the Bellevue Nurses' Club was what had been announced as "an open discussion on the Red Cross situation" with special reference to the question of the affiliation of nurses' associations with the Red Cross and lecture courses for the benefit of the public delivered under the auspices of the Red Cross.

The subject was introduced by Miss Pindell who stated that the New York City Training School for Nurses Alumnae Association had sent a communication to the Nurses' Committee New York State Branch Red Cross, asking for recognition as an affiliated association with the Red Cross Nurses' Corps. Miss Pindell read the answer received from the Secretary of the Nurses' Committee, also the rules of the committee in regard to the enrollment of nurses for Red Cross service. A syllabus of a course of lectures on Home Care which had been given in Washington under the auspices of the Red Cross was also read and Miss Damer was asked to open the discussion.

Miss Damer said that she felt that the nursing profession had not been doing its duty by the Red Cross, for as the Red Cross had shown its willingness to conform to the nurses' standards, the nurses should either have enrolled or stated the reasons why they were not willing to do so. If they took no action in the matter they must expect that the Red Cross would take other steps to provide nurses for their work. With regard to the affiliation of nurses' organizations with the Red Cross, the nurses would need to go very slowly. For one reason, they had already undertaken more work than they had been able to attend to and instanced the Public Health Committee which had been appointed at the last annual convention of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae. She advised the nurses to first ascertain what benefit it would be to them to affiliate with the Red Cross, and also what responsibilities that affiliation would entail, just what they would bind themselves to, and she mentioned that the Red Cross had undertaken to train its own nurses for tuberculosis work. This last statement was not correct as was stated later by Mr. Charles W. Hurd.

Mrs. Edmond Kelly stated that if instruction was to be given in nursing matters she thought the nurses were the proper people to undertake it.

In regard to the matter of affiliation of Associated Alumnae through Central Committee Red Cross, Mrs. Charles G. Stevenson stated that she thought it advisable, because in the first place, it would lead to a uniform standard of enrollment throughout the States. At present, every State could make its own rules, subject of course to the approval of the Central Committee. Also if the nurses' organizations did affiliate they would be more likely to have a voice in the selection of their representatives on the Committee for the Enrollment of Nurses.

Mrs. Stevenson was then asked to give some information with regard to the Red Cross work she was doing in Brooklyn. Mrs. Stevenson began by referring to the discussion on teaching Hygiene in the Public Schools and on tuberculosis work at the last convention of the Associated Alumnae which had led to the appointment of the Committee on Public Health. She said that in order to arouse public interest in a question of this kind it was necessary to first enlist the interests of the parents. She then quoted Mayor Lynch's address made at the last annual meeting of the New York State Branch Red Cross in which he said that in order to get members and to keep up their interest in the Red Cross, opportunities should be given to show them that they have a part to play in Red Cross work and that universal instruction of people in the laws governing sanitation would seem to be a peculiarly appropriate field of work. In organizing the New Utrecht Society, a part of the Brooklyn Sub-division of the New York State Branch American National Red Cross, Mrs. Stevenson said she had carried out the idea of the Associated Alumnae and had appointed a Public Health Committee, to arrange for courses of lectures on Hygiene, Sanitation, Emergency Nursing or First Aid. A number of persons were interested in Brooklyn and she asked the registered nurses to coöperate with the Red Cross in lecturing to them. If not, she asked them to answer this question, whom did they think competent to undertake that work.

In reply, Miss Dock spoke very emphatically against the registered nurses taking any part in this work for the reason that "the glamour of the Red Cross" always attracted an undesirable class of persons. If such people were given instruction by the Red Cross it would be detrimental to the interests of the properly qualified nurse because these amateurs would immediately enter the nursing field in competition with the registered nurses and it was the duty of the registered nurses to protect the general public from all such nursing quacks. Miss Dock also said that if the Red Cross was going to give lectures of this kind, the registered nurses would place themselves in a very foolish position

by enrolling for Red Cross service; she did not think the nurses ought to enroll unless the Red Cross agreed not to do anything of the kind.

Before beginning to speak Miss Dock had asked if any of the Red Cross people were present and Mr. Charles W. Hurd, Field Agent and member of the Executive Committee New York State Branch, was introduced by Mrs. Charles G. Stevenson. Mr. Hurd took part in the discussion that followed. Finally Miss Damer stated that as long as the nurses were not enrolled in the Red Cross they had no right to take any action with reference to work that was being done by the Red Cross, and she offered a resolution that all delegates present from nursing organizations instruct their members to enroll either in the Red Cross Nurses Corps or as regular members. After this resolution had been adopted Miss Gladwin, Superintendent of Nurses, Woman's Hospital, Manhattan, asked permission to say a few words.

Miss Gladwin stated that she had met the women in Brooklyn who were interested in organizing this class, that they were chiefly the mothers of families and homekeepers. Not one of them supposed for an instant that attending a few lectures would qualify her to take the place of the professional nurse. Miss Gladwin said she had spent several years in a small town where there was much demand for such simple instruction as these classes were intended to give, to help people to live better and to prevent sickness and disease. She had been frequently asked to instruct such classes, she had done so in the past and should be glad to do so again whenever her other work permitted.

The meeting was then adjourned.

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### ITEMS.

THERE have been several changes made in the rules governing the enrollment of nurses for the Red Cross in New York State. At the meeting of the nurses' committee on March 5th, it having been found that it was oftentimes a great inconvenience and sometimes impossible for an applicant to appear before the enrollment committee, Rule 2 was made to read:

All applicants must file letters of reference from two nurses of good standing, vouching for the moral character, professional standing and suitability of the applicant for this special work, unless she is endorsed by the executive committee of an affiliated body of the New York State Red Cross of which she is a member.

Rule 4 is to read:

All applicants must appear before a member of the Nurses' Committee for examination, and must present to the committee, with their other papers, the endorsement of their application by that member of the committee, unless the alumnae association of which she is a member is an affiliated body of the New York Red Cross.

Rule 5 was added as follows:

All applications for enrollment must be filed at the state office.

The names of nurses enrolled since the last report are as follows: Miss Katherine Cole, R.N., Troy; Miss Anna M. Beadle, R.N., Troy; Miss Anna T. Pederson R.N., New York; Miss Martha E. Bollerman, R.N., Astoria; Miss Nora Brown, R.N., New York; Miss Frances Detwiler, R.N., New York; Miss Marie Louis, New York; Miss Eleanor M. Scott, Rochester; Miss Jessica S. Heal, Rochester; Miss Elizabeth Weber, Rochester.

Hon. Robert W. Hebberd, Commissioner of Public Charities in the city of New York, has substituted the staff and serpent in the hospitals of his department instead of the red cross, on the sleeve of the white uniforms, as heretofore. The Commissioner was glad to make this change, realizing fully the importance of protecting the emblem and limiting it to its proper field.

In the April number of the *Red Cross Bulletin* is an article by Surgeon Braisted of the United States Navy on "The Japanese Red Cross Nurse" which closes with the following suggestion:

It has seemed to me that as the experience gained by the Japanese in the last war has shown that it is especially desirable that Red Cross nurses for use in the services should have training in Military Hospitals to familiarize them with military ways and customs, that it would be wise and economical that in all general army and navy hospitals provisions should be made for the training of Red Cross nurses in time of peace. Experience has shown that the ordinary trained nurse, not responsible to any central organization or stringent discipline, has been far from satisfactory. A Red Cross nurse who has proven herself by a period of observation worthy of employment for the care of the sick of the army and navy, might safely and economically be employed in the military hospitals at government expense, thus providing a specially trained corps of female nurses for our soldiers and sailors of unexcelled professional and moral excellence and providing for this type of woman a compensation and permanent calling for which by nature she is specially fitted.

When we realize that in the navy alone there are seventeen general hospitals without any provision for female nurses in peace or war, the opportunity for this work by the Red Cross is at once evident. Such an organization in time of peace would lend itself to ready and rapid expansion in time of war.

I feel that this suggestion merits at this time the earnest consideration of the Red Cross of the United States.